

70.
The Divine Institution of the Gospel Ministry,
AND
The Necessity of Episcopal Ordination,
ASSERTED,

IN A
SERMON,
Preach'd at the
Primary VISITATION
OF THE
Right Reverend Father in God
OF SPRING,
Lord Bishop of EXON,
Held at Okehampton, Aug. 19th, 1709.

By *William Roberts*, M. A. Rector of
Jacobstow, in the County of DEVON.

The Third Edition.

*Publiſh'd by His Lordſhip's Command, and at the
Request of the Reverend the Clergy.*

EXON:

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To the Right Reverend FATHER in GOD,
OF SPRING, by Divine Providence, Lord
Bishop of EXON



My LORD,

WHEN your Lordship commended the following Discourse to go abroad in Publick, I could not but think it my Duty to make it first wait on your Self, and beg Leave to carry about with it your Lordship's great Name, as its Pass-port and Protection: On that Errand it now attends your Lordship; and it seems a pardonable Presumption at least, to hope, that your Lordship will not refuse to Patronize, what you have already been pleas'd to Approve.

If your Lordship has been inform'd, with what Unwillingness it first appear'd before you at Okehampton, your Lordship will easily believe, 'twas never design'd to go any farther; and therefore, it came thither in a Dress suitable only to the Coarseness and Roughness of its own Country. Nor dare I now venture to alter it; because, the honest Plainness of its Garb, as well as the good Intention of it, may (for all I know) be one Reason, why your Lordship took a Fancy to it.

But as I shall not enquire into the Reasons which mov'd your Lordship to order it to the Press, so neither shall I offer to Apologize for what your Lordship has thought fit to Commend. Nor, indeed, would I trouble your Lordship with one Word more, but that I have it particularly in Charge from my Brethren, not to neglect this Opportunity of expressing their just Sense of your Lordship's great Worth, of the Happiness they enjoy under your Lordship's Government, and of the many endearing Marks of your Care and Concern lately shewn them at your Lordship's

Vifi-

The DEDICATION.

Vifitation: This, my Lord, is what they so sincerely desire to give a Publick Testimony of, that it would be thought by them an unpardonable Omission should I wholly forbear to mention it on this Occasion. And yet I am so conscious of my own Unfitness for such an Undertaking; that I must beg their Leave only to give my Reasons why I have rather chosen to decline it.

And perhaps it will be deem'd no inconsiderable one, to say, That Things of this Nature, tho' never so true, are yet generally look'd on as Flattery and Design; especially when they come from one, to whom your Lordship hath lately done so great an Honour.

Add to this, that Panegyrics are least acceptable to those who most of all deserve them. Besides, your Lordship's great Worth has already reach'd farther, than 'tis possible for these Papers ever to come; and therefore your Lordship does as little stand in need, as you would allow, of such an Undertaking.

Again; your Lordship's Excellencies in the Pulpit, are no more to be express'd, than they are to be imitated; and that Tongue which can account for them, and set them forth better than your Lordship's own Performances, must be such an one as this Age hath not produc'd.

'Twould be moreover Injurious in me, to take the Praises of your Lordship's Charity out of the Mouths of so many innocent Children, who will shortly proclaim 'em in a manner much beyond what I can pretend to; because they will speak out of the Abundance of those Hearts, which will be fill'd with a sensible Experience of your Lordship's great Goodness. Not to observe, that Praises are sometimes ordain'd, in a peculiar manner, out of those Mouths.

And as unjust would it be, to engross the Commendation of your Lordship's Affability; because, as universal as its Influences are, so common ought the Eulogiums of it to be; and by Consequence, they are the Right of Every One.

The DEDICATION.

But (my Lord) the greatest Task is, to excuse my self for not insisting at large on your Lordship's great and real Affection to the best of Ecclesiastical Establishments; and your exact Conformity to that great Apostolical Canon, Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates.

These (my Lord) are the brightest Gems in Your Lordship's Mitre; These shed a Lustre on your whole Person, and, like the precious Ointment on the Head of Aaron, cast a beaming Influence to the Extremities of your Attire; These have made Your Lordship the Hopes and Confidence, the Pleasure and Delight of all your Clergy.

In a Word, (my Lord) Monarchy and Episcopacy are your great Care; the Support and Countenance of these we, in a great Measure, owe to Your Excellent Lordship, as we do Your Lordship's Self, in a peculiar manner, to Her most Excellent Majesty. And for both these we must be for ever indebted; since what is inestimable, as Religion and Loyalty are, can never be paid for.

That Your Lordship may so long fill the Episcopal Chair of this Diocese, as to leave a lasting Impression of Piety and Loyalty on the Minds of all your Clergy; That the known Loyalty of these Western Counties may always be rewarded with One of Your Lordship's Spirit to preside over them; and that, after a long and very happy Life, Your Lordship may have a Weight of Glory in the Church Triumphant, proportion'd to the Care and Concern which you undergo in, and for, the Militant and Conflicting Church; are the incessant Prayers (I dare not say, of my self, lest I should incur the Displeasure of all my Brethren, but) of all Your Lordship's Clergy, and, among them, in a most especial manner, of, My LORD,

Your Lordship's most dutiful Son, and
Most oblig'd humble Servant,

W. Roberts.

I

H E B. V. iv.

No Man taketh this Honour unto himself, but he that is called of G O D, as was Aaron.

THE *Success* and very *Being* of Religion, so much depend on the *Divine Commission* of those who serve at the *Altar*, that 'tis no Wonder the *Grand Adversary* of Mankind, among other Methods to compass his End, has labour'd to propagate these Two Opinions: One, That the very Distinction between *Sacred* and *Profane* is groundless and false: The Other, That the *Sacred Character* is to be extended beyond the Limits that God has appointed. The First of these brings a *Contempt* on the *Ministry* in general, and so cuts off all Religion at once: And the Second fixes the Title of *Ministers* on those who are none; which as *surely*, tho' more *slowly*, produces the same Effect.

Now, tho' notwithstanding *these*, and *all other*, *INFERNAL ATTEMPTS*, Religion has hitherto kept up some Credit and Countenance in the World; and we are infallibly assur'd, That *the Gates of Hell shall never* totally prevail against it: Yet 'tis too visible, that the *Church of God* has hereby suffer'd in its most *Essential* Parts; and the *Divine Ordinances* have been either lightly regarded, or profanely, as well as ineffectually, *administer'd*. Now, to retrieve the *Honour* of the *Christian Ministry*, (without which 'tis impossible *Christianity* it self can subsist) 'tis necessary to be satisfied in these two Points, the one plainly express'd, and the other consequentially suggested, in the Words of my Text:

- I. *That no one ought to exercise the Office of a Minister in the Church of God, without a Divine Commission.*
- II. *Who may be truly said to have such a Commission.*

These Two Points, therefore, with their proper *Inferences*, shall be the whole Subject of my present Discourse.

I. *No one ought to exercise the Office of a Minister in the Church of God, without a Divine Commission.* This I shall prove.

1. From the Words of my Text, and the Arguments Im-
ply'd therein.
2. From some other Considerations.

1. From the Words of Text, and the Arguments imply'd therein. *No man taketh this Honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* For the right Understanding of which Words, we are to observe, that St. Paul, who, in all Probability was the Author of this Epistle, among other Arguments to demonstrate the *Excellency* of the *Christian Religion* above the *Jewish*, shews, that the *Sacrifice and High-Priest of the Gospel*, are of far greater Worth than those of the *Law*. The *Jewish Sacrifices* could never expiate the Guilt and Punishment of Sin, because they were defective in their Nature, and often to be repeated. And then the *High-Priest* was a *Sinner himself*, and therefore not so well qualify'd to offer for the Sins of *others*. Whereas, under the *Gospel*, as the *Sacrifice* is of infinite Value, so the *Offerer* was perfectly innocent. But notwithstanding the Dignity and Worth of both these, there is *something* else requisite to make the *Offering* compleat, viz. *The Divine Appointment*. For tho' there be infinite Value in the *Sacrifice*, and perfect Holiness in him who offers it, yet still it cannot be Effectual, unless they are peculiarly appointed by God himself. This the *Apostle* shews, with respect to the *Sacrifice*, in several Places of this Epistle; but with respect to the *Offerer*, in the Beginning of this Chapter. For in the first Verse he tells us, *Every High-Priest, being taken from among Men, is ordain'd for Men in Things pertaining to God; that he may offer both Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins.* And then in my Text, *No Man taketh this Honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* From hence it is evident, First, That He, who officiates in *Divine Matters*, is to be set apart, and to have a distinct *Commission* from the rest of Mankind; And, Secondly, This *Commission* must be deriv'd from *Divine Institution*. For upon these two Principles the *Apostle's* Argument

ment depends. It was necessary, that the High-Priest, under the *Christian*, as well as *Jewish* Dispensation, should be *taken from among Men*, and *divinely* appointed to his Office; the Reason whereof is, because it belongs to God alone to appoint his *Ministers*. So that whosoever considers the Force of the Apostle's Reasoning, will find, that by *Honour* is meant, not only the *High-Priesthood*, as some have fancy'd, but *every other Holy Office* in the *Jewish* and *Christian* Church. And consequently, tis the *Height of Presumption*, to execute any such Office without a *Divine Commission*.

By *Commission*, I all along mean an *outward* Call to the Ministry: For tho' an *inward* Call be necessary, and no one ought to undertake so *high* an Office without a thorow Perswasion, and Intention, that he *can* and *will* promote, and contribute to, the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Mens Souls; yet, the *outward* Call is that which the Apostle here *principally* means; the being *externally* appointed and constituted to any Holy Office, either *immediately* by God himself, or *mediately* by those who are *divinely* authoriz'd to invest Men therewith; as *Aaron*, and his *Sons*, and the *Levites*, were consecrated, and set apart by *Moses*, by virtue of the Commission he received from God for that End.

Now, besides the plain Meaning of my Text, here are three other invincible Arguments imply'd, to prove the *Necessity* of such a *Divine Commission*, to qualify a Person for any *Sacred* Office.

1st, The *Dignity* of the Office it self. 2^{dly}, The *constant Practice* among the *Jews*. And, 3^{dly}, The *Example* of our *Saviour*.

1st, The *Dignity* of the Office it self. The Apostle here calls it an *Honour*; and it will appear to be an *Honour* of a very *high Degree*, if we consider its *Nature* and *Design*. The Ministers of Religion are the *Representatives* of God Almighty; they are to publish his Laws, to pass his Pardons, and to preside in his Worship: God has committed to them the *Keys of his Kingdom*, and *whosoever Sins* they duly remit, *they shall be remitted*, and *whosoever Sins* they retain, *they shall be retain'd*. They are the *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, the *Dispensers* of his Holy Word and Sacraments: In short, they are the *Messengers* and *Ambassadors* of Heaven, and on their

Ministrations the Assistances of the Holy Spirit, and all the Graces of a good Life, depend. All these Characters and Powers are ascrib'd to 'em in *Holy Scripture*; which sufficiently demonstrate the *Dignity* of their Function, and are a plain Argument, that *None* but *God himself* can give them their *Commission*. For who dares, without the express Orders of Heaven, undertake an Office which includes so many and such great Particulars? Should any One take upon him the Character of an *Ambassador*; should he offer Terms of Peace to *Enemies*, pretend to *Naturalize* Foreigners, and grant *Pardons*, without a Commission from the *Supreme Magistrate*; as all his *Acts* would be null and void, so he would be highly criminal against his *Prince*, and liable to the severest Punishment. The Application is so easy, that the *Heathens* themselves would never venture to Officiate in *Religious Matters* without a suppos'd *Inspiration* from Heaven, or a previous *Initiation* by those whom they thought intrusted by the *Deity* for that purpose.

2dly, Let us consider the constant Practice among the Jews. The *Apostle* here makes the Calling of *Aaron* the Pattern of all other *Ministers* in the *Jewish* and *Christian Church*. It is usual with the *Writers* of the *New Testament*, as well as the *Ancient Fathers*, to enforce the Obligation of the *Gospel Institutions*, by comparing them with those of the same, or a like, Nature under the *Law*; and therefore, 'tis of great Moment to consider the Practice of the *Jewish Church* in the Case now before us. And we all know, that *None* could approach the Presence of *God*, to minister in *Holy Matters*, but such as were particularly appointed by him. When *God* instituted Offerings and Sacrifices, and the other *Positive Parts* of his Worship, He, at the same Time, set apart a peculiar Order of Men to be the *Administrators* of them: So that the Persons who were to minister, were equally of *Divine Institution* with the *Ministrations* themselves. Thus *Aaron*, and his *Sons*, and the *Levites*, were Consecrated by the express Command of *God* to *Moses*; and they had all of them their distinct Commission from Heaven, and no less than *Death* was the Penalty of invading their Office, *Num.* 3. 10. & 18. 7. Nay, *God* was more than ordinarily jealous of this Honour, and vindicated it, even at the Expence of several Miracles: Thus, when *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* (tho' *Levites*, and consequently nearer to the Lord in

Holy

Holy Matters than the rest of the Congregation) *usurp'd* the Priests Office, God Almighty miraculously destroy'd both them and their *Associates*; and their *Censers* were ordered to be *beaten into broad Plates*, and fix'd on the *Altar*, to be *everlasting* Monuments of their Sacrilege, and a Caution to all the *Children of Israel*, that none should presume to *offer Incense before the Lord but the Seed of Aaron*, who alone were Commission'd to this Office, Num. 16. Thus *Uzzah* was, by the immediate Hand of God, *struck dead on the Spot*, for *touching the Ark*, tho' he did it out of Zeal to hinder it from falling, 2 Sam. 6. 6, 7. To shew, that no *Pretence* of doing God Service can justify the *Meddling in Holy Things*. And King *Uzziah* attempting to *offer Incense before the Lord*, was judicially *smitten with Leprosy*, and so excluded for ever after, not only from all *Sacred*, but even *Civil Society*, 2 Chron. 26. 16, &c. A plain Argument, that the *Sacerdotal* is not included in the *Regal Office*, nor derived from thence; but is of a *distinct Nature and Institution*. I omit many other Instances of the like Nature.

Now, *these Things are written for our sake, and for our Example*, that None of us should *lust after prohibited Things*, and invade an Office which does not belong to us. For, as St. *Jerom* rightly observes, *What Aaron, and his Sons, and the Levites, were in the Temple, such are the Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons in the Christian Church*. These are appointed by God, as *Those* were; and therefore, it can be no less Sacrilege to *usurp their Office*; nay, it must be far greater, because the *Honour of the Ministry*, as the *Apostle* argues, rises in proportion to the Dignity of their *Ministrations*. Now, it can't be deny'd, that *Realities* are more valuable than *Types*; *Heaven* is better than the *Land of Canaan*, and the *Sacraments of the Gospel* to be preferred before all the *Offerings and Expiations of the Law*.

3dly, Let us consider the *Example of our Saviour*, who (as the *Apostle* speaks, in the Verse after my Text) *glorify'd not himself to be made a High-Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to Day have I begotten thee*. Tho' our Saviour wanted no *Gift* to qualify him for this Office, as having the *Divine Nature* inseparably united to his *Humane*, and giving sufficient Evidence of his *Abilities*, when but Twelve Years

Years old ; and tho' the *Necessities* of Mankind called loudly for such an Instructor, yet he would not enter upon his Office 'till he was *externally* Commission'd thereunto, by the *Visible Descent* of the Holy Ghost upon him, and by an *audible Voice* from Heaven, proclaiming him to be the *Messiah* ; and he was then about Thirty Years old. All the former part of his Life he spent in a *private* Capacity. He had Power and Authority beyond any *other Man* whatsoever, to *take this Honour to himself*, and yet he abstain'd from it, 'till this Commission was so remarkably given him by his Father. He came to *fulfil all Righteousness* ; and therefore would do nothing that might give the *least Encouragement* to an undue Behaviour. And as his Example is to be a Rule and Pattern in *other* Matters, so Especially in *this*. For indeed, there can no probable Reason be given of his *deferring* so long to enter upon his Office, but that he might thereby instruct us in the High Nature of the *Gospel Ministry*, and discourage all Persons from *intruding* into any *Sacred* Office in the Christian Church. For his Example plainly teaches us, that no *Internal* Qualifications, no Good End or Intention, can warrant a Man's *Exercising* any Holy Function, without a *Divine Commission*.

Which having thus prov'd from the Words of my Text, and the Arguments imply'd therein, I shall now, in the *Second Place*, briefly mention some few others.

(1) Then, we may observe, that tho' our Saviour had *many* Followers, yet *none* of them presum'd to *Preach* or *Baptize*, or *perform* any other *Sacred Office*, 'till they were *particularly* Commission'd by Him. Thus St. *Mark* tells us, Chap. 3. v. 14. 15. That of all those who came unto him, he *Ordain'd Twelve*, that they might be with him ; and that he might send them forth to *Preach*, and to have Power to *heal Sickneses*, and to *cast out Devils* ; and afterward, the *other Seventy*, which went out upon a *like Errand*, were especially appointed by him. So likewise, after his Resurrection, when he advanc'd the *Eleven* to be *Apostles*, he did it in a most *Solemn* Manner : For first, he assur'd them of his own Authority, *All Power*, says he, *is given me, in Heaven, and in Earth*. After which, he *breath'd on them*, and said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. Then
he

he gave them the *Power of the Keys*, and Authority to exercise all the *Holy Offices* in the Christian Church, and to convey the same Authority to *others*; promising, that he would be *always* with them and their Successors *even to the End of the World*, to ratify and confirm what was done in his *Name*, and agreeably to this *Commission*. Now from hence 'tis plain, that it was our *Saviour's* express Will and Intention, that all those who are *Ministers* in his Church, should derive their Authority, either *mediately*, or *immediately*, from Heaven. And accordingly we may observe,

(2.) That in the Beginning of Christianity, all those who officiated in *Divine* Matters, received their Commission either from God *himself*, or from *Apostolical Hands*, and very commonly from *both*: For we have many Instances hereof in the New Testament, and the other Writings of the Three First Centuries *. The Seven Deacons were *constituted* by the Apostles: And St. Paul and Barnabas *Ordain'd Elders*, or Presbyters, in every Church, which they planted †: And the other Apostles used the same Method: As St. Clemens (who lived and wrote in their Time) witnesses; Christ ‡ (says he) *was sent by God, and the Apostles by Christ*: And after our *Saviour's* Resurrection and Ascension, *the Apostles went forth in the Power and Assurance of the Holy Spirit, and preached the Kingdom of God to all Countries and Cities: And the First-Fruits*, or those whom they first converted, *having try'd and prov'd them by the Spirit, they constituted and ordained*, Εἰς Ἐπισκόπους καὶ Διάκονους τῶν μελλόντων πιστεῦν, i. e. *To be Bishops and Deacons, of those who should afterwards believe*. I need not mention any more Instances: For Scripture and Antiquity is full of 'em. Which abundantly proves the *Necessity of a Divine Commission*, in order to the being a *Minister* in the Christian Church.

I proceed now to the *Second Point* I propos'd to speak to, which was, to consider,

II. *Who may be truly said to have this Divine Commission*: And here I shall not doubt to affirm, that *None*, but those

* Vid. Dodwel. Dissert. II. in Irenæum, Sect. 20. 21, &c.

† Acts 14. 23. ‡ 1 Epist. ad Corinth. Sect. 42.

those who are Ordain'd by such as we now commonly call *Bishops*, can have any Authority to minister in the *Christian Church*: For, that the *Power* of Ordination is solely lodg'd in that Order, I shall prove from the *Institution* of our *Saviour*, and the constant *Practice* of the *Apostles*. That the *Power* of Ordination, lodg'd in the *Apostles*, was of *Divine Institution*, I suppose, no one will question, who reads these Words of our *Saviour* to them after his Resurrection: *As my Father sent me, so send I you*, John 20. 21. And lo, *I am with you alway, even to the End of the World*, Mat. 28. 20. For from hence it is evident, First, That it was by a *Divine Commission* that our *Saviour* ordain'd, or sent his *Apostles*. Secondly, That by virtue of the same *Commission*, the *Apostles* were at that Time *impower'd* to ordain, or send others. And, Thirdly, that this *Commission* to ordain, was alway to continue in the *Christian Church*, and to remain in such Hands as the *Apostles* should convey it to: All this, I say, is evident from these Words of our *Saviour*, when duly consider'd and compar'd. And hence this *Proposition* naturally follows: WHOEVER has a Power to Ordain, must derive it from the *Commission* which our *Saviour* receiv'd from God, and gave to his *Apostles*, and was by them convey'd to their Successors. The only way then to know in whose Hands this *Commission* is now lodg'd, is, to enquire, what Persons were appointed by the *Apostles* to succeed them in this Office. Now, 'tis plain to any one, that will read the Scripture without *Prejudice*, that there were *Three distinct Orders* of Ministers in the *Christian Church* in the *Apostles* Days, and which were designed to continue to the *End of the World*. The lowest of these Orders was that of *Deacons*: These were at first, by the Direction of the *Apostles*, nominated and chosen by the People, but invested in their Office by the laying on of the *Apostles* Hands. They were ordain'd, not only to take Care of the *Poor*, but also to *Preach* and *Baptize*; as is evident from the Instances of St. *Stephen* and St. *Philip*, who were Two of the first Seven. Secondly, We read of a higher Order, who were also invested in their Office by the *Apostles*: These are commonly called *Presbyters*, or *Elders*, in Scripture; tho' that Name was not appropriated to them, 'till the latter End of the Apostolical Age, as will appear afterwards. These had, and still have, a Power to *Preach*, and to administer

ster the Sacraments, to pronounce *Absolution*, and in some Cases, and upon some Occasions, to rule and govern the Christian Church. And then, Thirdly, we likewise read of another Order, who were Superiour to, and had Authority over, both the former: Such were, besides the Apostles, *Timothy* and *Titus*. For 'tis plain, from the Epistles St. Paul wrote to 'em, that they *presided* over the *Presbyters*: They had Power to enforce them to their Duty, to receive *Accusations against*, and *judicially* to pass Sentence upon, them: Which abundantly proves their Superiority; and several others were constituted by the Apostles to the same eminent Office. Such were St. *James*, surnamed the *Just*, and *Epaphroditus*; who are termed *Apostles*, or *Bishops*, by all Antiquity. And such, in all probability, were those whom St. Paul calls *Apostles of the Churches*, 2 Cor. 8. 23. and joyns with *Titus*. Such also were those *Angels* of the Churches, mentioned in the *Revelation*.

I know some have been pleased to tell us, That *Timothy* and *Titus*, and those Others of the highest Order, were extraordinary Officers in the Christian Church, and so of temporary Institution only; but this is said without any Ground, or plausible Pretence. That they were sometimes sent upon extraordinary Messages, and had a Power, upon Occasion, to do extraordinary Things, such as *Miracles*, &c. is very true; but then the same is to be said of the *Presbyters* and *Deacons*. *Philip* (we know) was only a *Deacon*; and yet God employ'd him in several extraordinary Matters. And the working of *Miracles* was so common in the Beginning of Christianity, that ordinary Christians were frequently endow'd with this Power. So that if this were an Argument for the temporary Institution of one Order, it must be so too for all the rest: Which they, who make the Objection, dare not say; and thereby acknowledge, there is no Force in it.

But they farther urge, that *Timothy* was an *Evangelist*; because St. Paul bids him, *do the Work of an Evangelist*. But in Answer to this, Two Things may be said; either of which fully answers the Objection. First, supposing the Office of an *Evangelist* to have been a distinct Office, and of temporary Institution only, yet there's a vast Difference between doing the Work of an *Evangelist*, and being really such a One. 'Tis said

said of *Araunah*, that, as a King, he gave to King David, 2 Sam. 24. 23. Yet I hope, no one will from hence argue, that he was really a King. But then, *Secondly*, An *Evangelist* was no distinct Officer at any Time in the Christian Church. For the proper Notion of an *Evangelist* in the *Acts* and *St. Paul's* Epistles, is, One who was eminently qualify'd to Preach the Gospel, and had taken very great Pains therein. And therefore, the Title of *Evangelist* was meerly accidental, and given as an *Additional*, or *Surname*, to Persons. Thus *St. Philip* was call'd an *Evangelist*, because, by his laborious Preaching, he had converted *Samaria*, and propagated the Gospel in several Places: And yet his Office was no more than that of a *Deacon*. For tho' he was dignify'd with that Title, he could only Preach and Baptize, and had not the Power of *Laying on of Hands*, which both *Timothy* and *Titus* had: And therefore, his Office was far inferiour to theirs. From all which, 'tis evident, that *Timothy's* Power over *Presbyters* did not accrue to him upon the Account of his being an *Evangelist*, supposing he was one: And the Meaning of the Advice of doing the Work of an *Evangelist*, can be no more than this, viz. That he should diligently Preach the Gospel, not only to those who were already converted, but to *Infidels* also, and thereby enlarge the Bounds of Christianity. But this no more proves his Office of *Ruling Presbyters*, and *Ordaining*, to be temporary, than *St. Philip's* being call'd an *Evangelist* proves the Office of Preaching, and Baptizing, to be so. So that here is nothing to object against the *Permanency* and Continuance of the Office *Timothy* and *Titus* were ordain'd to.

Indeed, (to use the Words of Bishop *Stillingfleet*) They, who go about to unbishop *Timothy* and *Titus*, may as well unscripture the Epistles that were written to them, and make them only some particular and occasional Writings, as they make *Timothy* and *Titus* to have been only some particular and occasional Officers. But the Christian Church, preserving these Epistles, as of constant and perpetual Use, did thereby suppose the same kind of Office to continue, for the sake whereof these excellent Epistles were written. And we have no greater Assurance, that these Epistles were written by *St. Paul*, than we have, that there were Bishops to succeed the Apostles in the Care and Government of the Churches. Eccl.

clef. Caf. p. 11. So that, according to the *most* Judgment of this Great Man, the Office of *Timothy* and *Titus* is of the *same* Authority, and design'd to be of the *same* Continuance, with the *Epistle* that were written to them. And surely, Nothing can be said more highly for the *Jus Divinum* of Episcopacy, than this.

From what has been said, it plainly appears, That there were *Three distinct Orders* set apart to the Ministry by the *Apostles*. Our next Enquiry then is, To how many, or to which of these, the *Power of Ordination* was committed. Now, that the *lowest* Order (*viz.* that of *Deacons*) had not this Power, is by all confess'd. And the *highest* Order (of which *Timothy* and *Titus* were) had it, we are assur'd, by the express Testimony of *St. Paul*. The only Question then is, whether the *second* Order (*viz.* that of *Presbyters*) was ever invested with this Power. The *Affirmative* of which Question can never be prov'd from Scripture, or Antiquity. For,

I. 'Tis frivolous to argue from the *Community* of Names to the *Sameness* of Office. And therefore, tho' the Words *Bishop* and *Presbyter* be *promiscuously* us'd, and *mere Presbyters* frequently called *Bishops*, yet this doth not prove, that therefore all the Powers, which belong to those we now call *Bishops*, were ever lodg'd in those *Presbyters*. At this Rate of Arguing, *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*, would all be but one Order: For the *Apostles* are some called *Διακονοι*, *Deacons*, as well as *Presbyters*: Nay, our *Saviour* himself is called by that Name: But how ridiculous, and absurd would it be, to infer, that *Deacons* have a Power to *Ordain*, and are *Apostles*, and *Bishops*, because those, who are called *Deacons* in Scripture, had such a Power, and were called by these Names? And yet this is the *utmost*, that the Arguments from the *promiscuous Use* of the Words *Bishop* and *Presbyter* can amount to.

The *only* Method to prove, that the Power of Ordination belongs to *Presbyters*, is, to shew, that whoever had a Power to *Preach*, and *Administer the Sacrament*, had also a Power to *Ordain*; or, that whoever were called by the Name of *Presbyters*, or *Bishops*, were invested therewith. But this is what can never be done. On the contrary, 'tis very evident, that *many*, who were authorized to preach and administer the Sacraments, had *no Power* to *Ordain*. *St. Paul* tells *Titus*, Chap. 1. v. 5. That for this Cause he left him in *Crete*, that he might *Ordain*

dain Elders in every City : But this could be no Cause of leaving him there, if the *Presbyters*, or *Elders*, had the Power of Ordination lodg'd in them : For that *Island* had been converted to Christianity long before this Epistle was written, and before *Titus* came thither : And, no doubt, there were *many Presbyters* among 'em, Persons to preach and administer the Sacraments to the Inhabitants of that *Island*. The same may be said of *Timothy's* being sent to *Ephesus*. To what Purpose was he sent thither, if the *Presbyters* there before had Power to ordain ? So that tho' *Presbyters* are called *Bishops* in Scripture, this doth not prove, the Power of Ordination was ever committed to them. Neither,

Secondly, Can this be prov'd from that perpetually quoted Passage, *1 Tim. 4. 14.* where *St. Paul* exhorts *Timothy*, not to neglect the Gift that was in him, which was given him by *Prophecy*, with the Laying on of the Hands of the *Presbytery*. For supposing, *Timothy's* Ordination is here spoken of, (which many Learned Men have questioned) I have shewn before, That the *Apostles* themselves were called by the Name of *Presbyters*. And so the *Presbyters* here mention'd may, very probably, be *Apostles*, as many of the Ancients thought. Certainly *St. Paul* was one of them, or at least among them ; and by his Authority alone the Ordination was compleat, tho' one, or more, who were *meer Presbyters*, laid on their Hands in Concurrence with him, to testify their Consent and Approbation : As is the Custom at this Day in the Ordination of a *Presbyter* ; and has been sometimes done at the Ordination of a *Bishop*, as in the Case of *Pelagius I.* Bishop of *Rome* *. And 'tis remarkable, that *St. Paul* (*2 Tim. 1. 6.*) ascribes the whole of *Timothy's* Ordination to his own Laying on of Hands. In short ; to make this Place any thing to the Purpose, these Three Things at least must be prov'd : First, That by *Presbytery*, is here meant a Company of Persons ; Secondly, That these Persons were all *meer Presbyters* ; And Thirdly, That None but such gave *Timothy* his Ordination. The First of which is uncertain ; The Second improbable ; And the Third absolutely false. Not to mention several other Difficulties, which must be clear'd, before this

* Vide Bevereg. in Can. Apost. 1.

this Text can be brought to speak the Sense, which the *Patrons* of the *Presbyterian Cause* would extort from it. Inſomuch, that we may well *admire*, with the Learned * *Mr. Selden*, (who can't be ſuſpected of Prejudice in Favour of *Episcopacy*) how any One can offer this Text, as a Proof of *Presbyters* Power to ordain. Upon the Whole, there is not the *leaſt* Footſtep in Scripture, or Antiquity, of ſuch a Power being convey'd by the *Apoſtles* to any, but ſuch, as are of an Order *ſuperiour* to that of *Presbyters*...

For the further Clearing of which, and to ſolve thoſe Difficulties this Point has been entangled with, give me leave, as briefly as I can, to lay before you my Sentiments, concerning the *Apoſtles* Proceedings in the *Settlement* of Officers in the ſeveral Churches, which they planted.

The *Apoſtles* (as I have ſhew'd) receiv'd from our Saviour a *Divine Commiſſion*. Whatever therefore they did in Purſuance of that Commiſſion, muſt be of *Divine* Inſtitution. There is then no Reason in this Caſe to diſtinguiſh between *Jus Divinum* and *Jus Apoſtolicum*, as the Learned Biſhop *Beveridge* has obſerv'd †: For this Commiſſion was of *Divine* Authority; and they were guided by the *Infallible* Spirit of God in all Things relating thereunto: So that whatever they did, which was within the Limits of that Commiſſion, is as much of *Divine Right* and *Inſtitution*, as if God himſelf had *immediately* order'd it: Now the Power of Ordination being *expreſſly* included herein, (as I ſhew'd before.) whatever Offices they appointed by vertue of this Power, may truly be ſaid to be of *Divine Inſtitution*. But then as to the *Settlement* of Perſons ordain'd to thoſe Offices in *particular* Churches, the *Apoſtles* Method ſeems to be this:

Having receiv'd the aforeſaid Commiſſion from our Saviour, and being fill'd with the *Holy Ghoſt*, firſt of all they eſtabliſh'd a Church at *Jeruſalem*, of which they made St. *James* Preſident, or Biſhop; as is evident from his Authority at the firſt *Council* held there, and from the concurrent *Teſtimony* of *Ancient Writers*. To him they gave a Power of Ordaining, as well as Preſiding, in that Church: And he ſeems to have been fix'd there ſo ſoon, becauſe of the Multitude of *Believers* at that place.

B

* De Syned. L. I. C. 14. † Cod. Can. Vind. Cap. 11. § 18.

Place. Under him were constituted some of the two *Inferiour* Orders before mention'd. This Church being thus settled, the *Apostles* dispers'd themselves into several Parts of the World. And when they had converted a considerable Number at any Place, they Ordain'd the most *competent* of them to the Offices of *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*. To these they committed the *Care*, and *Government*, of the Church in their Absence; still reserving to themselves the *Episcopal* Power of Ordaining, and of *Visiting* those Churches, and *setting in order the Things that are wanting*. And when there happen'd to be occasion for more *Presbyters* and *Deacons* by reason of the Increase of Believers, they either went in Person, or sent others invested with Apostolical Power; who sometimes were order'd to *reside constantly* among them, and sometimes were call'd off to attend at *other* Places. So that in *several* Churches there were at first only *Presbyters* and *Deacons* fix'd, who took care of the Affairs of the Church in the Apostles Absence. But before the Death of all the Apostles, Bishops were settled in *every* Church, according to the *Model* of that at *Jerusalem*.

Episcopacy therefore, as it implies a Superiority above *Presbyters*, and a *Right* to Ordain, is of *Divine* Appointment, included in the Commission, which our Saviour receiv'd from his Father, and deliver'd over to the Apostles: But as to *Diocesan* Episcopacy, or the *Limiting* a Bishop to a certain *District*, tho' that too be of *Apostolical* Institution, yet it is not *absolutely* necessary, but seems to be a *prudential* Appointment of the *Apostles*, for the *Preventing* of *Schisms* and *Divisions*, which were likely to arise from an *Equality* of Power among the Governours. And therefore it was instituted in some Places *sooner*, in others *later*: But wherever the Gospel was spread, it was settled before the End of the first Century.

This I take to be a true Account of the Apostles Method in *settling* of Churches, and the Officers therein: And which, if *seriously* and *impartially* consider'd, will be found most agreeable to the *Ancient Records* of Christianity, in the New Testament, and the Primitive Writers. And by this Account we may answer the most *Considerable* Objections, that have been made against the *Divine Right* of Episcopacy. For,

1st, From hence we may easily account for all those Places of Scripture, which are brought to prove the *Identity* of Bishops

shops and Presbyters; as *Acts* 20. where the *same* Persons, that are call'd *Elders* or Presbyters in the 17th Verse, are call'd *Επισκοποι*, *Overseers* or Bishops in the 28th. And *Phil.* 1. 1. the Apostle directs his Epistle *to the Saints which are at Philippi, with the Bishops, and Deacons*. And in his Epistles to *Timothy*, and *Titus*, having mention'd the *Qualifications* of a *Bishop*, he proceeds to those of *Deacons*, without so much as naming *Presbyters*. This is thought by some an *unanswerable* Argument against the Three-fold Order in the Christian Church. But not to mention what is commonly said to this Objection, the foregoing Account will furnish us with a full Reply. For I think, we *may*, and *should*, grant, that by *Bishops* in all those Places are meant only such, as we now call *Presbyters*. *Theodore's* Opinion being very probably true, viz. * That those of the *highest* Order, now call'd *Bishops*, were at first call'd *Apostles*; and the *second* Order, now call'd *Presbyters*, had then the Title also of *Bishops*. And perhaps where-ever the Word *Bishop* is found in Scripture as apply'd to an Ecclesiastical Officer after our Saviour, the *Middle* Order is always meant†. For tho' the Apostles are sometimes call'd *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*, yet they are never call'd *Bishops*. Their Office indeed is once call'd *Επισκοπή*. But in all the fore-mention'd Places of Scripture, by *Επισκοποι* we are to understand the *Middle* Order, which we now call *Presbyters*.

(1) For *First*, in St. Paul's Charge to the *Elders of Ephesus*, among all his Directions, there is nothing but what is proper to be spoken to Persons of this Order: But not a Word about *Ordination*. Which certainly would not have been omitted, if that Power had been lodg'd in them: Especially considering St. Paul had so fair an Occasion for it. For when he had told 'em, they should take heed to the *Flock of Christ*, over which the *Holy Ghost* had made them *Επισκοποι*, since after his Departure grievous *Wolves* would enter in, and of themselves some should arise, speaking *perverse* Things, to draw *Disciples*

B 2

* Tom. 3. p. 473. Edit. Par. 1642. † And therefore in the Syriac Version of the *New Testament* the Word *Επισκοπος* is usually rendred by *Presbyter*, and *Επισκοπή* by *Presbyteratus*. Vide *Bevereg. in Can. Apostol.* 2.

ples after them, it would have been very natural to have given them some Caution about such as were to be admitted into Holy Orders, if the Power of *Ordination* had belong'd to them: But there is not a Syllable in all that long and affectionate *Charge* concerning that Matter. Which to me is a plain Argument, that 'twas none of their Province. They had indeed the Government of the Church of *Ephesus*, while *Timothy*, ther Bishop, was absent; or rather, before he was their Bishop, according to the best Chronologers: And therefore St. Paul speaks much to 'em concerning that Matter, but nothing that intimates their *Power of Ordination*: So that the Persons, to whom he their speaks, were undoubtedly of the *Middle Order*.

And thus likewise by Bishops in the Epistle to the *Philippians*, such as we now call *Presbyters* are meant. And therefore in that whole Epistle St. Paul gives no Direction to them concerning *Ordination*. For that was not the Business of those *Επίσκοποι*, but belong'd to *Epaphroditus*; whom, Chap. 2. 25. he calls his *Brother*, and *Companion in Labour*; ὑμῶν δὲ Ἀπόστολον, but your *Apostle*. And 'tis probable, St. Paul ordain'd him to that Office, when he sent him with this Epistle. For which Reason, at the 29 Verse of that Chapter, he charges them, to receive him in the Lord with all Gladness, and to hold such in Reputation. And he is by all Antiquity reckon'd the first Bishop of *Philippi*. And St. Jerom himself not only agrees to this Interpretation, but from hence proves, that the Apostles of Christ convey'd their whole Office, and Authority, to such only. His Words are very remarkable *. *Paulatim tempore procedente & alii ab his quos Dominus elegerat, ordinati sunt Apostoli: sicut ille ad Philippenses Sermo declarat, dicens, Necessarium existimaui Epaphroditum vestrum Apostolum ad vos mittere.* So that the Apostolical Office was not temporary, but design'd to continue in the Church of Christ. And therefore the Apostles took care to Ordain some to succeed them, who were at first call'd by the same Name. As also *Theodoret* expressly tells us †: *Those (says he) whom we now call Bishops, were at first call'd Apostles.*

* Com. in Gal. 1. 19. † Vid. Tom. 3. p. 323 & 333. Ed. Par. 1642.

Apostles. And from the Character here given to *Epaphroditus*, he argues, That the *Επίσκοποι* in the Beginning of the Epistle were to be subject to him; and consequently no more than mere *Presbyters*.

The *same Order* is also meant under the Title of *Επίσκοποι* in the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*; and their Office is there term'd *Επισκοπή*. For in the Qualifications for that Office, there is nothing to intimate, that *such* being Ordain'd would have a Power of Ordaining others: And therefore, says *Theodoret* upon the place, *Here again St. Paul calls a Presbyter by the Name of Bishop*, 1 Tim. 3. 1. And then makes this general Remark *: *Formerly the same Persons were called both Presbyters and Bishops; and those now called Bishops, were then called Apostles: But, in process of Time, the Name of Apostle was left to those Apostles strictly so called; and the Name of Bishops ascribed to all the rest.* So that granting mere *Presbyters* to be *Scripture-Bishops*, which some have so earnestly contended for, yet nothing can from thence be inferr'd, to prove them to have *equal Powers* with those we now call *Bishops*, who are Successors of a higher Order. For in all the Directions to and about those called *Bishops* in the New Testament, there is nothing said that implies a *Power of Ordination* lodg'd in them. But when *St. Paul* writes to *Timothy* and *Titus*, he then expressly mentions *their Power* to Ordain; and is very large in setting down Rules to direct them, *when* and *how* to exercise it. The Reason of which Difference of Language must be this, That these *latter* had this Power, whereas the *others* had not, and consequently were of an *Inferiour Order*. They might Rule, and govern the Affairs of the Church, in the *Apostles* Absence, and when they had no fix'd *Bishop*

B 3

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* Τὸς αὐτοὺς ἐκάλεν ποτὲ Πρεσβυτέρους ἢ Ἐπισκόπους. τὸς δὲ νῦν καλεμένους Ἐπισκόπους, Ἀποστόλους ὀνόμαζον. τῷ δὲ χρόνῳ περὶούγῳ τὸ μὲν τῆς Ἀποστολῆς ὄνομα τοῖς ἀληθῶς Ἀποστόλοις κατέλιπον. τὴν δὲ τῆς Ἐπισκοπῆς προσηγορίαν τοῖς πάλαι καλεμένοις Ἀποστόλοις ἐπέθεσαν. Vol. 3. p. 473. Edit. Par. 1642.

among them; but they had no Authority even at *that time* to Appoint and Ordain other Ministers: That was alway peculiar to the *Apostles*, and those of the *Apostolical Order*. The Objection therefore of *Presbyters* being call'd *Bishops* in Scripture, is of no Force against the distinct *Divine institution* of *Episcopacy*; for the *Bishops* in Scripture can never be prov'd to have a Power of *Ordination* *.

The Truth of the whole Matter is this: Those who were vested with this Power in the *Beginning* of Christianity, were commonly known by the Name of *Apostles*; and the *Middle Order* had the Appellation, sometimes of *Bishops*, and sometimes of *Presbyters*. But shortly after, the Name of *Apostles* were appropriated to those who were constituted by our Saviour; their *Successors* in Modesty declining so High a Title: And then the Three Orders were *distinguish'd* by the Names of *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*. And this Distinction was fix'd immediately upon the Death of the *Apostles*, Before, or in the very Beginning of, the *Second Century*; as appears from this, That all the Writers *at*, and *after*, that Time constantly reckon up the Three Orders under these Three *Determinate Titles* †. It is therefore manifest, that from *Presbyters* being call'd *Bishops* in Scripture, no Colour of Argument can be drawn against the *Three-fold Order* in the Christian Church, or any

* And I think it highly probable, that St. *Clemens*, who wrote in the *Apostolical Age*, about the Year of Christ 65, [*Dodwell. Addit. ad Pearson. Dissert. 2. de Succes. Cap. Sect. 24, 25. & ejusdem Dissert. Sing. Cap. 11 apud Pearson. Op. Posthum.*] but one Year after S. *Paul's* 2d Ep. to *1 Tim. thy*, and before *Bishops* were generally fix'd, and their Titles *determined*, speaks in the Scripture Language. And therefore, thro'out his whole Epistle, by *Bishops* and *Presbyters*, we are to understand those of the Second Order. For he no where ascribes to them the *Power of Ordination*; but appropriates that to the *Apostles*, and those *Επισκοποι και πρεσβυτεροι*, mentioned 1 Ep. Sect. 44. Whom he there plainly intimates to be the *Apostles Successors*, distinct from, and superiour to, those he calls by the *promiscuous* Names of *Bishops* and *Presbyters*.

† Vid. *Bevereg. in Can. Apost. 2. Pearson. Vind. Ignat. apud Patres Apostolic. Vol. 2. p. 402, &c.*

any thing urg'd in prejudice to the *Divine Right of Episcopacy*.

(2.) The foregoing Account fully Answers the common Objection, which is brought from that famous Passage of *St. Jerom*: *Before* (says he) *it was said among the People, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas, the Church was govern'd by a Common Council of Presbyters*: But when this Parity among the Governours occasioned Schisms and Divisions, it was decreed all over the World, that One plac'd above the rest should be intrusted with the Care of the Church, that so these Mischiefs might be prevented. Now any impartial Reader of this Passage will believe, that the Time *St. Jerom* here speaks of, was while the Apostles were living: For *St. Paul* tells us, That this was the Language of many, when he wrote to the Corinthians: And this might happen in several other Churches, if (as I have shewn) the Middle Order were at first left by the Apostles to govern in their Absence. So that *St. Jerom* means no more than this, That at the first Planting of Churches, the Presbyters were for some Time intrusted with the Government of 'em; the Apostles not thinking it necessary to fix Bishops every where immediately; but afterward, finding that this Parity among the Governours was inconvenient, they fix'd some of the highest Order in all Churches, & confin'd 'em within certain Limits; *Ut Schismatis Semina tollerentur, That the Seeds of Schism might be remov'd, and the Unity of the Church preserv'd, by the constant Residence of a Supreme Governour among them.* But *St. Jerom* does not say, that those Presbyters had ever a Power of Ordination; for that he places in the Bishops alone. And when he advances Presbyters highest, and ascribes all other Powers to them, he excepts that of Ordination; which he would not have done without evident Reason. For we are to consider, that *St. Jerom* was a Man of a very high Spirit, and apt to grow hot upon any Opposition: And when he wrote that remarkable Epistle to *Evagrius*, and those other Passages in Favour of Presbytery, (of which Order he himself was) he had been highly provok'd by the Insolence (as he calls it) of the Roman Deacons, who assum'd to be upon the Level with Presbyters: And therefore he wrote in the Vehemence of Passion, when he would be sure to say all that he could for the Honour of his own Order: And yet, after all, he is forc'd to acknowledge, that a Power of Ordination does not belong to it. Indeed, all that he says is consistent enough with the

Divine Right of Episcopacy ; which he abundantly owns, and proves too, in several places of his Works.

3dly, The Account I have given, takes off all the Force of the Objection, which is founded on the *uncertain Succession* of the first Bishops in some of the most eminent Churches, such as *Rome, Antioch*, and others ; whereof some reckon *one* the first Bishop, and some *another*. Now, we may observe, that all the Difficulty is concerning who were *Bishops* of those *Sees* in the *Apostolical Age*, during the first Sixty or Seventy Years after our Saviour's Passion : For the *Succession* afterward is *clear*, and uncontroverted. But this Difficulty is easily to be accounted for, if we consider, that when the *Apostles* were obliged to be absent from those Churches, where only *Presbyters* and *Deacons* were at first fix'd, they *left*, or *sent*, upon all Emergencies, a Person, or Persons, with *Apostolical Power*, who were to reside there for a Time only, and then were called off again upon the like, or some other, important Occasion. For as *Diocesses* were not presently settled, so at first in very few Places did any one of the *Highest* or *Apostolical Order* constantly reside : Thus *Timothy*, after he had been a while at *Ephesus*, and exercised his *Episcopal Authority* there, was by *St. Paul* ordered to come to him at *Rome* : *Do thy Diligence*, says he, *2 Tim. 4. 9. to come shortly unto me*. And he tells him, that *Crescens* was then *gone to Galatia*, and *Titus to Dalmatia*. So that neither *Timothy* nor *Titus* were at that Time fix'd *Bishops* ; at least, they were not oblig'd to a *constant Residence*, but executed their *Episcopal Function* in *other Places* besides *Ephesus* and *Crete* : And no doubt, many others of the same Authority did the like.

Now, several of these Persons coming to the same Place at different Times with an *Episcopal Character*, were afterwards call'd *Bishops* of that *See* : And the Writers of the following Centuries, not being able to fix the exact Time of their Residence, some call'd *One* the first Bishop, and some *Another* : Others again reckon'd none for Bishops of those *Sees*, besides the *Apostles*, 'till some *One* was fix'd there. And this has given Occasion to those *different Accounts* of the first Succession. For at *Jerusalem*, where there was a fix'd Bishop at the Beginning, we find no Differences in this Matter : So that the *Apostles* not immediately fixing Bishops in several *Sees*, but sometimes sending

ding *One* with *Episcopal* Authority, and sometimes *Another*, is (I verily believe) the true Reason, why it is so difficult to know who were the *first* Bishops of those Places: For we meet with no such Difficulties after the *Apostolical Age*, when Bishops were every where settled, and the Limits of their *Jurisdiction* assign'd. But this can be no Objection against the *Divine Right of Episcopacy*; for the Office of a Bishop implies only a *Superiority* of Order and Jurisdiction, to whom *alone* the Power of Ordination belongs: But the *Relation* of a Bishop to *this* or *that* particular *Diocese* or District, is not *absolutely necessary*. All that I contend for is, that the Power of Ordination, which was given by Christ to his Apostles, was by them convey'd to *none* but such as must be acknowledg'd a *distinct* and *superiour* Order to that of *Presbyters*: And consequently, such *alone* are invested with that Power. For to Govern in the Church of God is not so *peculiar* to Bishops, but Presbyters and *others* may do this by their Appointment, and in Subordination to them; as the most zealous Asserters of Episcopacy have granted.

If then, according to the foregoing Account we distinguish between a Bishop at *Large*, and a Bishop with *Restraint*, a Bishop in the *Christian Church*, and a Bishop of a *particular Diocese*, and consider him only as One who is Superiour to *Presbyters*, and has the *Sole Right* of Ordination, we shall find that all the *material* Objections against the *Divine* Institution of Episcopacy may easily be answer'd.

And now, I presume, I have made it very plain, that None but such as receive Ordination from the Hands of those we now call *Bishops*, have *any* Authority to minister in *Holy Things*; since the Power of Ordination is appropriated to this *highest* Order in the Christian Church. And to what has been said, I might, for farther Proof, add the *joynt Testimony* of all Christendom for near Fifteen Hundred Years together; and challenge our *Adversaries*, to produce *one* Instance of a *valid* Ordination by Presbyters for all that Time. The Story of the *Scottish Culdees*, and all others of a like Nature, have been abundantly confuted and *exposed*: And (I think) *Ischyra* is the *only* certain Instance in all Antiquity of a Person's Officiating in Holy Things with a *bare Presbyterian* Ordination: But

But he was no sooner discover'd, but he was discarded, and all that he had done declar'd null and void *. As for *Aerius*, tho' he stiffly contended for an *Equality* between *Presbyters* and *Bishops*, yet I do not remember, that, tho' a *Presbyter* himself, he ever pretended to Ordain others, or that any of his Followers officiated upon such an Ordination. But however that be, this *Heresy* expired quickly after its Rise; for it began and ended in the latter part of the *Fourth Century* †.

Now, it seems very strange, if *Episcopacy* were not of *Divine Institution*, how it should prevail over all the World, and *Presbyters* tamely give up their *Right*, without any Complaint, or so much as leaving any Thing upon Record, to witness their *Original Authority* to After-Ages. In a Word, we have as much Reason to believe the *Divine Institution* of *Episcopacy*, and that the Power of *Ordination* is appropriated to that Order, as we have to believe the *Divine Institution* of the *Lord's Day*, of *Infant-Baptism*, and of the *Cannon of Scripture*: Nay, as we have to believe the necessary Continuance of any one positive Ordinance in the Gospel. If Men will exercise their Wit and Fancy, and ply the whole Force of their Understanding, they may raise plausible Objections against the plainest Truths. But this I dare say, that the *Divine Authority* of *Episcopacy* can't be questioned without weakning the Foundations of *Christianity* it self: For
it

* The Third Council of Alexandria, held A. D. 324. pronounce him a mere Layman; because his Ordainer Colluthus, being only a *Presbyter*, had no Authority to ordain. The Synod of Sardica pass the same Sentence, and call *Ifchyras*, Ὁ πανπύρνος, One full of all Wickedness. And *Socrates* terms this Fact, a Crime deserving a Thousand Deaths; His Words are, Ἰσχυρὰς πρᾶγμα ὕπὸ πολλῶν θανάτων ἄξιον. Οὐδὲ πώποτε γὰρ ἱεροσύνης τυχών, τὸ τῷ Πρεσβυτέρῳ ὄνομα ἑαυτῷ περιδέμενος, τὰ ἱερῶς πράττειν ἐτόλμησε. Vid. *Athanas. Apol. 2. de fuga sua. Theodoret. Vol 3. p. 592. Edit. Par. 1642. Socrat. Eccles. Hist. L. I C. 27. † Vide Bevereg. Cod. Can. Vind. C. II. Sect. 17.*

it stands upon the same Foot with the *Authority* of the Holy Scriptures; and the *same Arguments* that confirm the *One*, as effectually establish the *Other*.

Now then, to sum up the Evidence: A *Commission* to *Ordain* was given to *None* but the *Apostles*, and their *Successors*. And to extend it to any *inferiour Order*, is without Warrant in *Nature* or *Antiquity*; for every *Commission* is naturally *exclusive* of all Persons, except those to whom it is given: So that, since it does not appear that the *Commission* to *Ordain*, which the *Apostles* received from our *Saviour*, was ever granted to any but such as must be acknowledg'd to be of a *superiour Order* to that of *Presbyters* (which Order is the same with that of those we now call *Bishops*); therefore it follows, that *No Others* have any Pretence thereunto: And consequently, *None* but such as are *ordained by a Bishop*, can have a Title to minister in the *Christian Church*.

And now, I hope, I have given some Satisfaction concerning the Two Points I propos'd to speak to. I shall therefore briefly consider their proper *Inferences*, and so conclude.

I. Then, From what has been said, we may Infer, The *prodigious Folly* and *Madness* of those Persons, who, in Discourse or Writing, labour to expose the *Gospel-Ministry* to *Scorn* and *Contempt*. He that despises you, says our *Saviour*, Luke 10. 16. *despises Me*, and he that despises Me, despises Him that sent Me. Every Reflection on the true Ministers of the Gospel, ultimately terminates in God himself: But when, as 'tis natural, Men proceed from hence to burlesque the *Divine* Institutions themselves, to make Comical Representations of the *Sacraments*, and even to ridicule the *Authority* of the *Holy Scriptures*, tho' never so *stily*, and by *oblique* Insinuations, this is a Flying in the Face of God, a Despising his Wisdom, an Outraging his Majesty, and a Daring his Vengeance; and argues a Man to be at the End of his Chain, and to have gone his utmost Lengths in Impiety. Now, since all *Sin* is *Folly*, this must be the Height of Indiscretion, and the Extremity of *Madness*. 'Tis possible, by frequent Repetitions, Men may grow

grow insensible of their Crime, and stupify their Consciences to that degree, as to take Pleasure in such Excesses: And the Ambition of getting a *Name*, heading a Party, and being reputed *Wits* and *Free Thinkers*, may considerably heighten their Satisfaction: However, the pleasant Scene will quickly be shifted, and eternal Horror succeed in its stead: And 'tis a wild Bargain, for the sake of a little *momentary* Mirth to expose one's self to *Everlasting* Misery. But Persons of this Character are not to be dealt with in the Way of Reason and Argument. A *Jest* with them will weigh down a *Demonstration*; and the bare naming of *Priest* and *Priest-Craft*, will be thought a full Reply to all that can be offer'd for their Conviction.

II. The foregoing Considerations should oblige Men to be *nicely* cautious how they take upon 'em to *administer* the Sacraments, or exercise *any other* Holy Function in the Christian Church, without a *Divine Commission*. For this is to counterfeit the *Broad Seal* of Heaven, and to commit *Treason* against the *Most High*: And tho' such Persons may not meet with a *Temporal*, yet they can never escape an *Eternal* Vengeance. Under the *Jewish* Dispensation, God was wont to vindicate the Honour of the *Priesthood* by a *sudden* Execution on those who invaded it: For temporal Rewards and Punishments being the *main* Sanction of the *Law*, this was the most proper and agreeable Method. But the *Gospel* being chiefly establish'd on the Regards of *Eternity*, God Almighty does not think fit *presently* to exert his Power on such Occasions. However, since (as I have shewn) the *Usurpation* of the Ministry under the *Gospel* is an *equal*, nay, a far *greater* Crime than it was under the *Law*, we may conclude, that the *longer* the Punishment is deferr'd, the *heavier* it will be when it comes. Men should therefore be well assured of the *Validity* of their Commission, before they presume to act upon it. Especially considering the intollerable Mischiefs, which necessarily attend the *Usurpation* of the *Sacred Character*: For when Persons pretend to be *Ministers of the Gospel*, without having received their Commission, according to *Divine Appointment*, as they are guilty of *Sacrilege* in Executing an Office to which they have no Title, so all that they do in that Capacity is *null* and *ineffectual*: And consequently, those who are *their Followers* are led

led into a most *dangerous* State, since, for want of receiving the *Ordinances* of our Saviour from *commission'd* Hands, they have no Assurance of being under the *Gospel-Covenant*, or of partaking of *any one* Divine Grace; so that their Salvation is doubtful, as depending wholly on the *uncovenanted* Mercy of God. And from hence

III. We may infer the great Reasonableness and even *Necessity* of a *constant* Communion with the Established Church. And here I earnestly desire all Persons to consider this Matter seriously, as becomes those who have any Love for their own and others Souls. They who have *Episcopal Orders* are *lawfully* commissioned to Preach, and administer the Sacraments; as is acknowledged on *all Hands*: And consequently, those who are *baptiz'd* by them, are *undoubtedly* admitted into the Christian Church, and have a *Title*, by virtue of the Divine Promise, to all the Benefits and Blessings of the Gospel. On the other side, those who have *no such Orders*, can't prove their Authority to do any of the fore-mentioned Acts, there being no Instance in Scripture of *any* besides an *Episcopal* Ordination; and the Christian Church, for Fifteen Hundred Years, has allowed of no other. So that, take it in the most *favourable* Construction, all the Ministrations of those who dissent from us are *questionable*; there is no Certainty that any thing they do in Holy Matters is *valid*. Those, therefore, who join themselves to them, and have their Children *Baptiz'd* by them, must run the greatest Risque, and put their own and their Children's Happiness upon a *disputable* Point. Now, who that has any Regard to his Eternal Interest, any Sense of the Happiness and Misery of another World, any Consideration of the Blessed State of being in *Covenant* with God, would thus choose an *Uncertainty*, and lay the whole Stress of his Christianity upon a doubtful *Perhaps*, when he may, if he pleases, take the *sure* and *certain Way*, and partake of the Gospel-Ordinances from *unquestionable* Hands? So that a *constant Communion with the Established Church* is not so *indifferent* a Matter as some would make it, but an *indispensable* Duty, and which no one, who regards his Soul as much as he does his Body or Estate, would ever neglect. In *temporal* Cases we alway judge it reasonable, and our Duty, to take the *safest* Course; And why should we be so imprudent, as not to do the same in our *spiritual* Concerns?

I know how tenacious most People are of those Principles and Practices they have been *bred up in*, and long accusom'd to : But the Natures of Things will not be chang'd by our Opinions of them. To take the *safest* and *securest* Method in order to our Happiness, is both the plainest and most reasonable Principle we can act by : Consequently, since the Ministers of the *Establish'd Church* have an *undoubted* Commission, and *all others* who have not *Episcopal* Ordination a very *uncertain* one, if any at all, 'tis *safest*, and therefore most reasonable and necessary, *constantly* to communicate with this Church. And all this even upon the largest Concessions.

But then, if we'll believe the Primitive Fathers, who were certainly Men of Learning and Judgment, as well as Honesty and Integrity, the Case of those who joyn themselves to Pastors that have *no lawful Ordination* (and such are *all those* who have not receiv'd their *Commission* from *Episcopal* Hands, as is before prov'd) is much worse. *St. Ignatius*, who wrote within a hundred Years after our *Saviour*, having reckon'd up the Three Orders of *Bishops, Priests* and *Deacons*, expressly tells us*, that *without these, there can be no Church, no Congregation of Saints, no Holy Assemblies*. Again, † *Whoever belong to God and Jesus Christ, must be in Communion with the Bishop*. Be not deceiv'd (my Brethren) he that joyns himself to those who make Divisions cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. And farther ‡ he assures us, that *no one can do any Thing that pertains to the Church without the Bishop*. And, that *none but the Bishop, and such as are constituted and ordain'd by him, have Authority to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lords-supper*. And, that the *Ministrations* of all others are *null and ineffectual*. And those who maintain the contrary Opinion, *oppose the Will of God*, (he says) *and are to be avoided by all good Christians*. This, and much more to the same purpose, was writ by that *Holy Man* just as he was about to suffer *Martyrdom*. It would be endless indeed to transcribe the dismal Accounts, which both he and the other Fathers give of this Matter. They call it the *greatest Rebellion* against God, a Sin of the *highest Nature*, and which will subject Men to the *heaviest Punishment* : They tell us, that the Crime of those who associated

* *Ep. ad Trall.* † *Ep. ad Philadelph.* ‡ *Ep. ad Smyrnen.*

associated themselves to *Corah, Dathan and Abiram*, and of *Nadab and Abihu*, does not equal it; and they particularly answer all the Excuses which are made by our *Modern Dissenters*, such as their holding the *same Faith*, using the *same Form of Baptism*, and agreeing in all the *Essentials of Christianity*: They take Notice of the Pleas of *better Edification*, a *purser Way of Worship*, &c. and largely shew the Unreasonableness of them all*. If therefore the Sentiments of those Excellent Men, who shed their Blood for the Cause of God, be true, (and certainly we have no Reason to disbelieve 'em) who, that has any Regard to God or his Soul, would ever join himself to any other Communion than that of the *Establish'd Church*, where he is in a *safe Way to Salvation*, the *Dissenters* themselves being Judges? Who would *forsake* the Means of Grace, and thereby *forfeit* the Hope of Glory?

IV. From what has been said it is natural to infer, that the Maintaining the *Divine Right of Episcopacy*, is a Point of the greatest Consequence, not only to the *Well-being*, but even *Being* of the Christian Church; since, without it, all *valid Ordination* ceases; and then the Promises and Blessings of the Gospel become very uncertain to us, and (for all we know) wholly void, and of no Effect. Unless (says *St. Chrysostom* †) we are assured of the *Validity of our Orders*, all that we do signifies nothing. We ought therefore (as he goes on) to contend as earnestly for a *valid Ordination*, as we do for the *Faith* it self. For (says he) if *Persons intrude into the Sacred Office*, and take upon them to *Ordain without a Commission*, this naturally destroys *Altar, Church and Priesthood*. And then what will become of Christianity it self? This Doctrine may perhaps sound harsh in some Mens Ears, and be called *Want of Charity*, or by some other invidious Name; but surely, to adhere to the Institutions of Christianity, and not to Complement away the Truths of the Gospel, can never justly be term'd a *breach* of that, or any other Christian Virtue. For tho' *Lukewarmness* may in an Age of *Liberty* and *Licentiousness*

* Vid. Cyprian. Ep. 69, 73, 74. Edit. Oxon. Et de unitate Eccles. Chrysin Ephes. 4. Tom. 3. p. 822, &c. Optat. & Augustin. contra Donatist passim. Gesta Collat. Carthag. apud Dur Pin. p. 255, &c. † Loc. Citat.

business pass for *Moderation*, and *Indifferency* in Religion for a true *Gospel-Temper*, yet the *transposing* of Names will never alter the *Nature* of Things. * To contend earnestly for the *Faith*, and to be zealously affected for a *Good Cause*, and to vindicate the *Doctrines* and *Usages* of our excellently *Reform'd Church* upon all proper *Occasions*, will never be accounted by our *Saviour* (the best and most impartial Judge) inconsistent with *true Charity* and *Moderation*, but rather great and shining *Instances* of both. And as for Us of the *Clergy*, whose *Business* it is to *interpret* the *Scriptures*, and truly to *represent* the *Mind* of *God*, what a *Load* of *Guilt* shall we heap upon our selves, if we call *Evil Good*, or *Good Evil*? If we handle the *Word* of *God* so *deceitfully*, as to sooth Men in their *Errors*, and prostitute our *Opinions* and *Practices* to the *Humours* of the *Age*, or to any other *Temporal Consideration*. It therefore *highly* concerns Us, and all Others, especially those who are of *Character* and *Figure* in the *World*, and whose *Example* is of a *large Influence*, to be well establish'd in the *Principles* of *Religion*; that so we may be true to the *Church* our selves, and engage others to be so too †.

There are several other useful *Inferences*, which naturally follow from the foregoing *Discourse*; but I have trespassed on your *Patience* too much already, and therefore shall comprize them all in that extensive *Inference* of *St. Paul*, which equally concerns all *Orders* and *Degrees* of Men whatsoever; 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Wherefore, my Beloved Brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; for as much as ye know, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Now to *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, three *Persons* and one *God*, be ascrib'd, as is most due, all *Honour, Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion*, now and for ever.

A M E N.

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* Boni Militis est, adversus Rebelles & Hostes Imperatoris sui Castra defendere. Gloriosi Ducis est Commissa sibi Signa defendere. Vid. Cyprian. Ep. 73. Edit. Oxon. † Merito in Dies singulos Schismata & Hæreses surgunt, --- Dum illis Advocatione quorundam & Auctoritas præstatur & firmitas, Dum Baptisma eorum defenditur, dum Fides, dum veritas proditur, dum id quod contra Ecclesiam foris geritur intus in ipsa Ecclesia vindicatur. Vid. Cypr. Ep. 74. p. 214.